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OCTOBER

VOL.  
37

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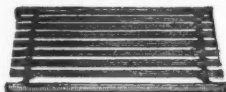
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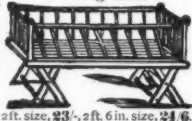
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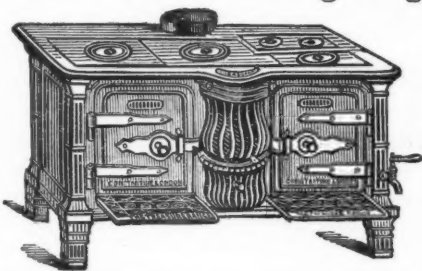
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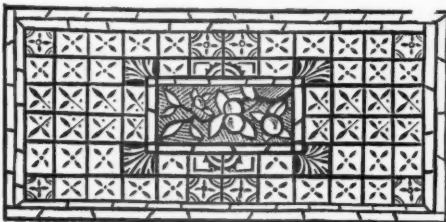
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# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal  
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CHARLES DICKENS

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1885.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## A STERN CHASE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

### THE FIRST PART.

#### CHAPTER VII. HUGH'S OPPORTUNITY.

THE shock had overtaken Rodney as he was strolling towards home, observing the wondrous beauty of the tropical night sky, with pleasure that was never abated by custom.

He was ascending a stony and hilly street when the ominous rumble and the sickening heave came, and he stumbled and fell forward, but received no hurt beyond a slight bruising of his hands. Although an earthquake is a phenomenon to which no man can get used, Rodney recovered his presence of mind and his feet simultaneously, and made for an open space, reaching it just as the second and slighter shock occurred. This time he did not lose his footing, and as the terrified people poured into the comparatively safe place which he had reached, he immediately applied himself to studying the "tremblor" in its moral aspect. He would not have pretended for an instant that he was not frightened; but he was not too much frightened to attend to his business.

"This will work up into something good," said the roving commissioner to himself, when he had moved about for some time among the excited groups, "and they will have the Santo Domingo affair in a week or two. An earthquake and a civil war in quick succession; they can't expect more than that, I think."

Wondering a good deal how Rosslyn and Pepito had fared, and whether any harm had been done to the Camp, Rodney made his way home, and found all

safe, with the exception that the chairs in the studio and his rickety little writing-table were jumbled together as though for a "cleaning," and a couple of big green flower-pots of native manufacture were overturned in the balcony. He had hardly concluded his tour of inspection, and ascertained that the two mulattos who formed Don Gualterio's permanent establishment had decamped, when Rosslyn arrived.

Hugh's narrative interested Rodney strongly. He was particularly struck by the absence of Norberto de Rodas at the critical moment; declared that he could not have been at such a distance from his cousin as to be unable to force his way back to her side; was, however, pleased at the incident, because it tended to confirm his own view of Norberto's character—and heard of the broken arm without concern.

"Judging from the bored and dejected look of fair Ines all the evening, I should say she will not be particularly grieved at anything that keeps him away from her for a while. I never saw her look out of sorts before; she is generally gay and talkative."

"Rodney did not see her when the fellow was not there; she was not bored and dejected then," Hugh complacently reflected on this remark.

"What became of Pepito?" was Rodney's next question.

"I don't know. In the giddiness and confusion of the first few moments, I did not think of him, and I never caught sight of him again. I suppose he got out some other way."

"No doubt he did. He's sure to be all right. Pepito is just the sort of person to be the sole survivor of a bad shipwreck, or the one case of rescue from a terrible conflagration. We must look him up to-morrow. And now as you are only at

your first earthquake, hadn't you better sleep it off as soon as possible?"

Hugh, being thoroughly tired out, assented to this, and added:

"I wonder whether we shall have another shock to-night?"

"Ah, to that I can only make you the proverbial answer, 'quien sabe?' The chances, calculated by experience, are against it. If a third were coming, it would probably have hurried up after the other two before now."

With the morning there was a general subsidence of terror, and a general consent to consider the earthquake a very little one. There had not been much material damage done, and Cuban nerves, although excitable, are hardy. Hugh Rosslyn was off betimes to the Teatro Real: he had contrived to drop a hint, at the moment of his leaving the theatre, to the fussy and important police-official who had accompanied Don Francisco. Rodney went to enquire after the welfare of the friends whose box he had left only a few minutes before the shock was felt.

Hugh succeeded in his errand, which the spoils of the pearl-mounted that Ines had worn on the preceding evening. It was found close to the rail in front of Don Saturnino's box, and a handsome reward to the finder obviated all the difficulties which might have been made about identifying the owner of the ornament, and handing it over to a stranger, whose claim to confidence was the single, though strong one, that he had been seen with Don Saturnino and his daughter on the scene of its loss.

Don Saturnino's mansion bore no external signs of disturbance; the great door was ajar, as usual, and the mulatto servant to whom Hugh addressed his enquiries undertook to find Teresita and bring her to the sala, into which apartment Hugh was ushered. The broad, good-natured face of the mulatto shone with admiration and friendliness as he admitted Hugh; for the story had spread among them of how the Señor Inglés had gone to the rescue of the señorita, whom all the household loved, and he was a hero in their eyes. On the occasion of his first visit to Don Saturnino's house, Hugh had been taken at once, with Rodney, to the coridor, and he had not formed any notion of the interior of the house. He found himself in a spacious room, admirably adapted to the needs of the climate, but, according to European ideas, sparsely furnished,

and deficient in those smaller articles of use and ornament that indicate habitual occupation by refined and cultivated women. There was no elegant litter in the great, cool, marble-floored room. No fully-furnished writing-table was set out for use; no needlework, with its pretty tools, lay about; no knick-knacks were to be seen, and no books. The walls were undecorated with any works of art, and only the centre of the floor displayed a square of handsome carpet. Between the wide, lofty, and unglazed windows stood white marble console-tables, with twisted gilded legs, and pier-glasses in tasteless gilded frames. Curtains of some light fabric hung over the door, but the windows, of which two opened upon the coridor, and two on the opposite side, upon the courtyard, were uncurtained. The tables and chairs that composed the actual furniture of the sala, were of the lightest construction, the latter formed of cane. These included several rocking-chairs. The room was shady and cool, and this effect was enhanced by the delightful sound of falling water. Hugh looked out into the courtyard. There remained no sign of the recent transformation of that large space into sleeping quarters for so many of the household as could sleep at all, or were not too much frightened to attempt to do so, and the scene which it presented was a very pretty one.

A marble fountain with a wide basin sent a thin column of water high into the air, and formed the centre of a miniature grove of palmettos, and shrubs, bearing flowers of the most brilliant colours, with many plants of the shining sharp-leaved kinds. An inner coridor was formed by the overhanging eaves, and the thin columns which supported them at the four corners of the hollow square, were wreathed with bright flowers and foliage. Two gorgeous cockatoos—one cream-colour, with a yellow head, against which the curved black beak showed lustrous, the other scarlet and green of the most vivid tints—were dozing on their perches, as though lulled by the sound of the plashing fountain. A majestic grulla, the tallest bird it had yet been Hugh's lot to meet outside a zoological garden, was fast asleep on its two-feet-six of legs, with its swanlike neck drawn back between its wings, and its long sharp beak thrust in among its soft breast-feathers. A couple of negro women squatting on the inner verandah, with bright orange handkerchief-headaddresses,

red cotton petticoats, and snow-white upper garments, were apparently in charge of large baskets of fruit placed on the ground by their side.

It was a scene to have afforded Hugh the keenest pleasure, had the artistic side of him been uppermost that morning, and he could not look on it with indifference, although he was listening eagerly for the coming of Teresita. It was not, however, the tap-tap of the old woman's stick which interrupted his contemplation, it was the deliberate step of Don Saturnino, who entered the room and greeted his early visitor with cordiality.

"I came thus early," Hugh explained, "because I was anxious to know how it fared with you all after the shock of last night, and also because I have been so fortunate as to recover the comb which the Señorita Ines lost. It is not broken."

He produced the comb, and was thanked in the most gracious terms by Don Saturnino.

"I asked for the señorita's attendant," continued Hugh, "because I owed to her lamentations the knowledge that the comb was missing, and I intended to restore it to her. I did not mean to intrude on you so early."

"I suppose Teresita has gone with Ines to the convent of Las Anunciadas. She has a good friend there, who will be anxious about her after last night."

Hugh, with his English notions of woman's nerves, and indeed his contempt for them, derived from certain glimpses which he had gained of Dr. Rosslyn's experiences, was so amazed to find a young lady equal to rising early and going out after a shock of earthquake, which had deprived her of her senses a few hours before, that he could not help expressing his surprise. Don Saturnino smiled.

"You will find us all going on much as usual," he said; "we should never settle down at all if we did not get over our frights quickly. You breakfast with us, of course? Doña Mercedes is most desirous of expressing her sense of our obligation to you. It was an unfortunate beginning of your visit, señor; you must not let it make you take our island in disgrace."

Hugh, who was almost guiltily conscious of his obligations to the earthquake, hastened to disclaim the idea of his being influenced by it. Don Saturnino then carried him off to a sanctum of his own

until the arrival of breakfast-hour, when Doña Mercedes would be visible.

The natural urbanity of Don Saturnino, the politeness and hospitality characteristic of his race and country, and his appreciation of the young Englishman's conduct in the scare of the previous evening, all combined to make him very pleasant to Hugh. He made him the usual profuse offers of aid and service, which, if they are insincere and unmeaning in Spain, are neither one nor the other in the Pearl of the Antilles, and invited his new acquaintance to accompany Rodney on a visit to his coffee estate, whither the family were about to remove in a short time, and where the artist would have an opportunity of studying the inland scenery of the island, and learning something, if he cared to do so, of its most important industries. All this was enchanting to Hugh Rosslyn, and it was not surprising that he should allow it to inspire him with hopes, rendered reasonable only by his ignorance of the social system of the people.

The return of a servant, who had been sent to enquire about him, with a favourable report of Norberto's condition, interrupted an interview in which Hugh had fallen in of a generally assenting listener, and soon after Don Saturnino led the way to the "comedor". This was a cool, spacious dining-room, empty-looking, although it contained all the really requisite furniture. The servants were busy about the long table, and Doña Mercedes and Ines were standing by it; so much Hugh saw with a first glance. The next revealed to him that Doña Mercedes was looking pale and nervous, and that the fair face of Ines wore the same troubled expression, only better controlled, as the first time he had seen her. By the side of Doña Mercedes was her little son, a puny child, with no likeness to either parent, and with the fretful look of combined delicate health and over-indulgence in his sharp, yellowish face. The child ran to his father, who caught him up in his arms, while Doña Mercedes gracefully expressed her pleasure at seeing Hugh, and her gratitude for the service he had done them. And Ines—how did she greet him? With a schoolgirl's "reverence" and downcast eyes, from which he caught not the most transient glance; with a formal, "Thanks, señor; I am very well," in reply to his enquiry.

Her father kissed her on the forehead, felt in his pocket for the comb which he had unceremoniously dropped into



that gaping receptacle for miscellaneous articles, and gave it to her.

"There is your comb, all safe, you see, like yourself, and owing to the same person. The Señor Rosslyn went to the theatre and had it looked for, early this morning."

Sudden tears sprang into the girl's eyes. She looked at Hugh full and straight enough now, as she thanked him warmly, and then she darted away, with a word of apology to her father, on the plea that she must tell Teresita of the finding of the comb.

The old woman, who was as superstitious as she was faithful, was firmly persuaded that misfortune to her beloved charge was presaged by the loss of an ornament which had come to her from her mother. Teresita was a good Christian, but she devoutly believed in omens, and would hardly have been persuaded by Sant' Iago himself that Norberto de Rodas, whom she hated with all the capacity of her race for good hating, had not the evil eye.

Hugh's attention was now called to the little boy, and he soon found that one spoiled child is like another, and that the ways of the spoiling parents are similar, all over the world. The little Ramon was as troublesome and unruly, as greedy and unpleasant, as any Master Dick of the visitor's previous acquaintance. Ines had returned in a few minutes, and the meal proceeded. It comprised some preliminary dishes, chiefly composed of native vegetables, unfortunately unknown in Europe, fish, followed by flesh, and fowl cooked in many ingenious ways, and a dessert of the finest West Indian fruits. The conversation, in which Ines hardly joined at all, turned naturally upon the scare of the previous night, and Don Saturnino good-humouredly rallied his wife upon her nervousness.

"She will never rest now," he said, "until we get away from town. She will be fancying that the disturbed air is bad for Ramon, and that the 'tremblor' will come again, especially to his address."

He laid his wrinkled hand tenderly on the crisp, jet-black hair of the child, as he spoke, and Hugh could see that he was indeed, as Rodney had said, very proud of this little son, whose years of manhood he could hardly hope to see.

"Take care," said Doña Mercedes rapidly, in French; "you will let him know that there is something to be afraid of. He is not so tall as English boys at his age," she added, addressing Hugh.

"I don't know; I am not a good judge. But—yes," he critically surveyed the son and heir, who was stealthily wiping his sticky fingers on his sister's white gown. "I think he is up to the average height."

"He will get on splendidly in the country," said Don Saturnino; "never fear that, *mi Mercedita*. Unfortunately we cannot go there quite so soon as we had intended, on account of Norberto. We shall have to wait until his arm is all right again."

"No doubt," assented Doña Mercedes coldly.

Ines had heard this trivial dialogue with varying emotions. To go to the country was to leave the place where he was, who had taught her a new meaning for the life he had saved; and the mere thought was pain. She knew nothing whatever of Hugh's intentions with regard to his stay in the island; but at least while he remained at Santiago she should see him, perhaps every day. She did not look beyond this; the new, unknown, undreamed-of feeling that had taken possession of her had no prescience in it; to see him was all she asked—only to see him, without the dread of her cousin's eye upon her; to have a few free, happy days, and to turn her thoughts away from the tormenting alternative of her fate, without the certainty of their being forced back to it by the covert threats of Norberto, and the cold inexorability of Doña Mercedes. That her father and his wife should have made arrangements for leaving town without saying anything on the subject to her, did not either surprise or hurt her; she was well used to being of no account in such matters; but the announcement filled her with dismay, divined by that one of the party whom it most concerned. His eyes brightened, the colour mounted to his forehead, a thrill of exultation passed over him, as he observed the quick turn of her head towards her father, and the irrepressible quiver of her lips.

"I regret the delay the less, however," continued Don Saturnino, "that it will give us more time to show the Señor Rosslyn"—he always stumbled over the name, much to his chagrin—"more of our city and its ways, than if we had been going immediately. And he has promised to accompany us, with Señor Henrique."

There might possibly have been some little anxiety on Don Saturnino's part as to how Doña Mercedes would take his having given so impromptu an invitation



to a stranger; but if there was, it was immediately removed by the warmth and graciousness with which she seconded the proposal.

And Ines? She had reason to be thankful that her stepmother rarely looked at her, for, if she had happened to do so at that moment, she could hardly have failed to mark the vivid colour that overspread her face at her father's words. Again Hugh read that fair face aright, and the present was joy, the future was paradise, because of his interpretation of it. They had not interchanged a dozen sentences that morning; they were hedged in by all the restraints of a social etiquette of which Hugh was so ignorant that he was afraid at every moment of infringing some one of its unknown rules; there was no chance of his being able to address a word to Ines in English; and yet he was almost wildly elated. His project of the preceding evening was taking form with every moment that passed; he had only to be patient, and the days that must intervene before he could carry it out would be gone. Let him but achieve one blessed opportunity of receiving its sanction from the lips of Ines, and he would fear nothing. But the doing of this was immensely difficult. He knew that to see her alone in her father's house, or to meet her unattended elsewhere, would be impossible; while to speak to her in English in the presence of others, if opportunity offered, would be dangerous. Nevertheless, if, after sedulous seeking, no other resource could be found, he must resort to that expedient.

The incomparable black coffee of Cuba had been served; Doña Mercedes had risen, and was about to leave the room; the spoiled child was clinging to his father and vehemently refusing to go with her; so that some confusion prevailed, when fate did Hugh a good turn. Don Saturnino was called away on a business matter, and left the room with a request that Hugh would wait for him. He had been obliged to rid himself forcibly of the little boy, who screamed with passion, and Doña Mercedes had to give all her attention to him. For a moment Hugh stood, a silent and awkward spectator of this domestic incident; the next he availed himself of it. Looking round the room as though he were commenting upon its size, he said to Ines in English:

"When do you go to the convent again?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Who goes with you?"

"Teresita."

"Can you trust her?"

"Surely."

"I beg you to excuse me," said Doña Mercedes, "if I leave you. Ramon is seldom so naughty."

Hugh held the door open, as she passed with the still recalcitrant urchin and followed by Ines, who once more made the visitor her schoolgirl reverence, but without uttering a word.

Hugh had hardly time to think of what had happened, before Don Saturnino returned. Then they smoked the inevitable cigaritos, and parted, the best possible friends.

Hugh was rather relieved to find that Rodney had not yet come in when he reached the Camp. He had a great deal to think of, and he was glad to be alone. He usually walked about when he had much thinking to do, but that had not occurred to him in the tropics until now, and to lie down on the cane lounge seemed better suited to the temperature. He lay down accordingly, and presently fell into a sound sleep, from which he woke, after a couple of hours, to find Rodney writing busily at his rickety table, and Pepito Vinent smoking with rival diligence in the coolest corner of the studio, with his head on a pile of Don Gualterio's portfolios, and his heels on a hat-box.

"How are you?" said Pepito, who could not nod, owing to the position of his head, but waved his cigar instead. "I have just looked in to give our friend a few hints, impressions of the crowd, and that sort of thing. So glad you got out all right. Not a bad little quake, was it?" he added, with the air of an impresario who had made a decided hit.

## ASTROLOGY.

### A CHAPTER FROM THE ROMANCE OF SCIENCE.

FEAR, hope, and curiosity have given rise to three of the chief factors in the moral development of man—viz., religion, poetry, and science. Fear being the most overpowering of all the emotions, it has followed that religion has had the greatest influence; and, from the earliest ages of which we have record, religion has played the leading part. Yet along with religion we invariably find poetry and science. The earliest poetry is religious

poetry, and the earliest science is invariably a theogony or a cosmogony—a history of the origin of the gods, and of the world. The continual conflicts among the three are thus easily accounted for, and their connections easily understood. Fear is never felt without some feeling of hope, and the two invariably end in intense curiosity. The lower animals show traces of the same things, and the object of fear is always with them an object of curiosity.

Religion and science, especially, have kept up their intimacy even up to the present time; and in modern times it is only after three hundred or more years of strife that the latter has succeeded in attaining an independent place. Long before she emerged from her dependence on religion, and even as she emerged as an independent power, science showed herself in three striking forms, almost prophetic of her future place. These three forms were astrology, magic, and alchemy.

It will not be out of place, therefore, to attempt to give a slight sketch of the old-world lore, which is sheltered under these heads.

Human delusions are as interesting as human certainties, but when they have been the delusions, not of the crowd, but of some of the greatest intellects, they become immensely more important. How came men to believe such nonsense? And are there possibly, at this present moment, opinions held, which to posterity will seem as absurd as even astrology? Such questions rise involuntarily to our lips. Now the principle at the bottom of astrology is not quite so absurd as might be expected. It is a principle which is held by not a few people at the present day. Among those who are believers in evolution, it is almost an axiom. The principle is that everything in Nature is linked to every other thing, and that man himself is no exception. "If that be so," we may imagine an astrologer saying, "then we have only to know the laws of the relations of one thing with another, in order to predict what will happen in any particular portion of Nature. We have only to know the laws of the order and motions of the starry heavens, and to compare them with events on earth, and then we shall be able to say what are the particular relations of the stars to sublunary things." And in days when astrology was a recognised science no one could possibly say that such a notion was altogether unreasonable.

Astrology, as a matter of fact, was

astronomy asserting her place as predictive knowledge, and implicitly affirming—what is supposed to be a late acquisition—the reign of law in Nature.

There is not much difficulty, either, in understanding why astronomical knowledge should, in early times, be turned to astrological purposes. The most pressing need felt by men, after the stage of utter barbarism has been passed, is for some clue to events, so that they may prepare for them, and thus make themselves the masters, instead of remaining the slaves, of the natural forces.

One of the triumphs of modern science is that man by its means has become master, to a great extent, of his own destiny; and one of the marked peculiarities of modern civilised society is the small amount of ordinary life which is left to chance.

To men in early times the natural forces must have appeared fitful and capricious to an extreme, and every human purpose liable to be frustrated unexpectedly. Amidst bewildering confusion, early men found the stately and majestic march of the stellar heavens to be the only natural phenomena having any appearance of order and regularity.

Some writers misrepresent early astronomy, when they assert that the modern discovery of the laws of the planetary motions was the chief cause in the decadence of astrology.

Nothing can be more untrue than such an assertion, for the regularity of stellar and planetary motions was discovered very early, and, what is more, one of the greatest impediments to the progress of astronomy was the opinion, almost amounting to a prejudice, that these motions were much more regular than they really are. This may be easily seen in the accounts of Kepler's bewilderment when investigating the orbit of the planet Mars.

It was very early perceived that the heavens were differently configured at different seasons of the year. One configuration was seen in spring, another in summer, and so on, and these configurations varied regularly through a certain number of changes of the moon, every change in the seasons having its own special astronomical phenomena.

The names of the zodiacal signs are very significant in this respect—for instance, the last three signs, the Sea-Goat, the Water-Bearer, and the Fishes, having reference to the watery or winter season; the Lion

to the heat of summer; and the Virgin to the harvest; and much the same may be said of the rest.

Now, men in early stages of intellectual development can only, in searching for causes, reason from what precedes to that which follows; so nothing could be more natural for them, in early times, than to connect the changes of the skies with changes occurring on the earth. The next step taken with equal, if not greater, ease, was for men to look upon the stars as an unfolding to them of the purposes of the gods, and at once astrology arose. The dependence of the processes of Nature on the sun was plain, and, men seeking to propitiate the gods at the right time, there followed attempts to calculate the recurrence of the seasons. Thus astronomy arose, and for a long period of time that science was pursued solely for the purposes of astrology and religion.

Tradition, almost universal, places the origin of astrology in Chaldea. With the ancients, the words "Chaldean" and "Astrologer" were synonymous. We find besides that the astrological doctrines held by all nations, from the Straits of Gibraltar to China, from Cape Comorin to the Baltic, have a large amount of matter in common.

The planet Saturn is called everywhere the Greater Infortune, and the planet Jupiter is called the Greater Fortune, and so on through the other planets and signs. This clearly points to a common origin, and bears out both history and tradition.

Of late years this opinion has been remarkably confirmed by the discovery of whole treatises on astrology written on clay tablets, in the ruins of ancient Nineveh and Babylon. From the data given by these discoveries, astrology has a genealogy, extending back for over three thousand years. It was by way of Alexandria that the Chaldean doctrines reached Rome, and that city swarmed with "Chaldei," "mathematici," "genethliaci" (all meaning astrologers), in spite of the efforts made by some of the Emperors to put them down. Manilius and Aratus, two Roman poets, made astrology the subject of their poetry. The work, entitled "Tetrabiblos"—on which has been based the whole of the astrology of the west, as cultivated by Arabs, Jews, and Christians—was written, it is said, by Ptolemy, the famous Greek astronomer, in the second century. Astrology was taken up, and vigorously worked at by the Arabs during the Middle Ages, and it

was through Arabic books and translations, that most of the astronomy and astrology of the Greeks became the property of the west.

On the revival of learning in the fourteenth century, astrology was turned to a curious purpose—viz., that of forming a science or philosophy of religion. This feat was attempted by Peter de Arbanus, or Albano, a learned physician of Padua, at the beginning of the fourteenth century. He cast the horoscopes of various religions, Christianity included, in order to discover the course of their future development, and the length of time they would endure. The learned gentleman got into trouble with the Inquisition, but, as he died at the age of eighty, before sentence was passed, that tribunal had to be satisfied with burning him in effigy. Jerome Cardan, the celebrated Algebraist, and Jean Bodin, a celebrated French political author, attempted a philosophy of history on a like method.

The use of astrology in this fashion has been praised by a nineteenth century philosopher, Auguste Comte, who goes even so far as to say that the rejection of astrology was premature, and has tended to retard the progress of the science of history.

From the fourteenth down to the end of the seventeenth century, great attention was paid to astrology, and the science was cultivated and patronised by both nobles and philosophers. The last astrologer who had public attention paid to him in England, was William Lilly, in the time of the Civil Wars between the King and Parliament. Both sides seem to have consulted him, and he wrote several books on the science, and an amusing autobiography. Lilly was examined by the Privy Council in regard to the causes of the Great Fire in London. He is said also to have been the model for the Sidrophel of Butler's Hudibras.

Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, astrology has fallen into disrepute, but has had a succession of votaries to our own day. Among what our old writers used to call "the vulgar," it is questionable whether there is a town of any size in Lancashire, or Yorkshire, without its professional astrologer, and the advertisements of professors of the science turn up in all sorts of odd corners in the byways of literature. So an extensive public must even yet exist, which has not got rid of all faith in the monitions of the stars.

It may not be amiss, now, to glance at astrology itself, and see what it really is.

In the first place, then, astrologers divide the heavens into twelve equal parts, called houses. This is done by dividing the vertical circle—or circle passing through the zenith and the east and west points of the horizon—into six parts of thirty degrees each, and six corresponding divisions lie below the horizon. In regard to these "houses", Lilly says that "the exact knowledge of them is so requisite, that he who learns the nature of the planets without exact judgment of the houses, is like an improvident man that furnishes himself with a variety of household stuff, having no place wherein to bestow them."

To each of these "houses" is ascribed a particular significance. For instance, the first house refers to the stature, health, and life of a man, or it stands in state astrology for the common people; the second house refers to wealth generally; the third to brethren, to letters, and to messengers, etc.; and so of the other houses. The seventh house is singularly heterogeneous in its signification, as it refers to lovers and husbands, animals strayed, thieves, and things stolen; so that if a young lady were to enquire after her absent lover, or an elderly lady after her favourite cat, the astrologer would look to "the seventh house and planets therein, and aspecting". The next things of importance in astrology are the zodiacal signs. Aries, the first sign, is described as being fiery, choleric, bestial, luxurious, intemperate, and violent; and, besides, it "rules" gumboils, tooth-ache, baldness, places of refuge for thieves, and, among other countries, England. Campanella says that "Aries makes people ferocious, stubborn, fierce, bold, presumptuous, and crafty, like the English". We ought to feel complimented. Taurus signifies people given to pleasures, like the Neapolitans. Virgo signifies the best mathematicians, astronomers, learned and ingenious men, etc. Libra points to those given to the delights of music, and so on.

The planets have their special significations, but their chief office in astrology is to point out the nature of events by their positions in reference to the houses and the zodiacal signs. Neptune, by modern astrologers, is supposed to be mild and beneficent. Uranus, on the contrary, very evil. All extraordinary events are ascribed to him; and if he happens to be placed in certain positions at the birth of anyone, he causes "the native" to be eccentric in

his habits and opinions. He is supposed to be the chief planet in making astrologers, antiquaries, and others of similar tastes.

Saturn is reckoned very evil—he is, as we have seen, called the Greater Infortune. Jupiter is supposed to be very good, and is called by astrologers the Greater Fortune. Venus is accounted a good planet; as also is Mercury, unless he is affected by the evil planets, when he becomes evil. The same may be said of the Moon, and of the Sun, as is said of Mercury.

The next thing to be taken into account are the aspects. These are certain distances between the planets. If there are sixty degrees between two planets, the latter are said to be in sextile aspect; if one hundred and twenty degrees are between, then the planets are in trine aspect. Both these aspects are supposed to be good. If ninety degrees separate two planets, they are in square aspect; and if one hundred and eighty degrees, they are in opposition. In these cases the aspects are evil. If planets are in the same degree of longitude they are in conjunction. If this occurs with good planets, it is good; if with evil planets, it is evil.

Such are the chief points of astrology, running into great details, which it would be tedious to describe in the present paper. In order to give judgment on any question or event, astrologers draw up a map of the heavens, for the time and place. This is done by means of a terrestrial globe, or a "table of houses". The latter is a kind of tabular planisphere for a given latitude, and referring merely to the ecliptic. When the map is drawn up, the astrologer gives judgment according to fixed rules.

Astrology has three divisions. The first, or horary astrology, is a species of divination, which seems to have been invented or perfected by the Arabian astrologers of the Middle Ages, judging from the fact that there is little of the sort in the Tetrablos, and from a host of its technical terms being Arabic. By orthodox astrologers of the Middle Ages it seems to have been looked at askance—as a species of magic. It depends on, for its chief principle, the old philosophical doctrine of universal sympathy. The planets and zodiacal signs in this case are symbols of the causes which are at work to produce the mental anxiety out of which the question has arisen; and so, by their relations, it is supposed they will indicate the end of the



matter. The second division is genethliacal astrology, or the doctrine of nativities, in which the planets are themselves causes of personal character, and of the events happening to a person. Mundane or state astrology is the before-mentioned application of astrology to politics and history; and the fourth division is atmospherical astrology, or the application of astrological rules and doctrines to meteorology, or the natural astrology which Bacon supposed might be possible at some future time, and which appears to be a likely result of the modern scientific enquiries into the physical constitution of the sun and stars, and into their electric, magnetic, and heat relations. It will be a remarkable event if modern science, after having expelled astrology, should have to bring it back in another form. The whitewashing of historical reprobates will be as nothing to it.

Eclipses, comets, and conjunctions of the superior planets, play a great part in state astrology. Some well-authenticated cases of success in this department are on record. One astrologer, by name Landino, according to Villari, drew the horoscope of religion, and predicted, from a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, that on the 25th of November, 1484, a great reformation of the Christian religion would take place; and it is singular that Luther was born in the very month of November of 1483 or 1484—some doubt existing as to the year. Tycho Brahe predicted, from the comet of 1577, that in the north of Finland there would be born a prince, who should lay waste Germany and vanish in 1632. Now, Gustavus Adolphus, it is well known, was born in Finland, overran Germany, and died in 1632. It is also very singular that during the very worst period of the late troubles in Ireland, Saturn should have been passing through Taurus, a sign which astrologers say rules Ireland, and prior to the passing of the Land Act, Jupiter and Venus should have been in conjunction with Saturn in the same sign. Also, just before the assassination of President Garfield two comets—first seen in the United States—appeared in right ascension, corresponding to Gemini, a sign, again, said by astrologers to rule the United States. Now, it is an old astrological doctrine that a comet, visible to the naked eye, appearing in the ruling sign of a country, portends the violent death of the chief ruler. There is no doubt that it is because of

chance coincidences of this sort that astrology maintained its place for such a long period of time, and that even at the present day many, otherwise well educated people, are led to think "there is something in it".

Flamsteed, the Astronomer Royal of that day, it is said, astrologically "elected" the favourable time for the foundation of Greenwich Observatory.

A great deal too much is made of the effects of scientific enquiry in putting down divination and other superstitions. The fact is, very few people have the ability to thoroughly grasp scientific truth. The real truth why we at the present day in the West of Europe have little to do with astrologers and fortune-tellers, is because life amongst us has become fairly certain in its general circumstances. Great epidemics are comparatively rare, physical catastrophes, like earthquakes, are still more rare; against common uncertainties of various sorts we have all kinds of systems of insurance; and last, but not least, we must not forget the efficacy of law, and the general respect there is for it. Reverse all these circumstances, go back not much more than two centuries ago, and we reach a state of society, even in our own country, in which neither life, liberty, nor property were safe for long together.

Then we may imagine how it was that the astrologer and the fortune-teller or witch became no small factors in making life at all tolerable. At the present day, the greatest believers in good and ill luck are gamblers of various descriptions—that is, those whose lives are most perplexed with uncertainties. We have known poor, uneducated women gravely consulting their packs of playing-cards to discover the fate in store for them in the midst of sorrow and tribulation. But, apart from anything of that sort, we may be certain that if there had been no capability for superstition in man, there would have been no science. Most certainly we may be sure that if there had been no astrology there would have been no astronomy.

#### THE POLICEMAN'S HOLIDAY.

IN a general way, a fête or two more or less makes little appreciable difference in the great tide of London life. But when the police force in general entertains its friends, there are signs and wonders in the air not easily to be overlooked. All over



London, the blue-coated divisions are stirring, and the usual sombre uniform of the force is relieved by the silver shoulder-knots and aigrettes of the bandmen, and the frogged and military-looking frocks of the inspectors. The railway-carriages travelling in the direction of King's Cross are tightly packed, and your burly policeman is not a very compressible passenger; but they tumble in by twos and threes with an air of cheerful unconcern, exchanging greetings with other members of the force on the platforms or at the barriers. Then there are policemen's wives, who are anxiously looking out for their husbands—vicariously, for the most part, with the eyes of little Tommy or Jemima—and policemen's sweethearts, who have to do the best they can with their own unassisted vision. Then there is the retired policeman in the corner, who has exchanged the helmet and stiff tunic for a felt hat and roomy serge suit, but who cannot so easily put off a certain fixedness of feature that marks the service in general.

As a rule, your policeman is far from garrulous. He may have given himself the official caution that he is not bound to say anything, but that what he does say may be taken down and used as evidence. Anyhow, when he talks, he generally avoids talking shop. A fellow-passenger, who hints at an attempted burglary in his neighbourhood, and tries to draw a professional opinion on the subject from the force, is none the wiser for his pains. Our policemen have the air of being happily indifferent to the whole calendar of offences, whether against person or property.

We are all bound for the Alexandra Palace—for the fête of the whole London police force; and it is quite evident, from the general throng of people who are waiting on the platforms, that the invitation of the policeman to his friends has been widely accepted, and, also, that his circle of friends is sufficiently wide. The policeman, it may be said, is not everybody's friend. There is a large section of the community which has a good deal to do with him, but is not particularly fond of him. On the other hand, he has friends and well-wishers in plenty, who are able and willing to spend a few shillings in joining his yearly fête.

And there is the Alexandra Palace perched on the top of Muswell Hill, with the greensward of the racecourse gleaming pleasantly in the sunshine. A strange, untoward fate has marred the career of

the once promising Alexandra Palace; fire, financial catastrophe, and one trouble after another have worked their will with it, and all its early promises of rational and elevating entertainments for the multitude have so far come to an end. But the Ithuriel spear of the police force has vivified the whole for a day; the organ once more rolls its sonorous chords through the place; the police bands are in full force on the terraces; while, within, the stage is occupied by burlesques and grotesques, and terpsichorean comedians. Then there is a grand assault-at-arms, where life-guardsmen drive at each other with sword and bayonet; and champion pugilists, quite pleased to find themselves appreciated by the force, let go with left and right, stop, counter, rally, and close, belabouring each other with well-stuffed mittens in a quite exciting and realistic manner. Then there is a cricket-match, with an eleven of clowns in the field, who, at each "over", turn head over heels on the sward, and stand on their heads and wave their legs ecstatically when anybody is given "out". And there is actually a comic policeman on the ground, with a very red nose and incoherent bearing, whose sallies are treated by the genuine members of the force with compassionate tolerance.

And the charm of the thing is that when the whole varied round of amusements is completed, as the shades of evening draw on, the round begins again by gaslight, and travels on with renewed force till the time for closing arrives. In this way the constable who is on duty for the night, has had his little day of enjoyment, and gives place to the man who has finished his turn of duty, and can throw himself with zest into the pleasures of the evening. There are civilians, too, robust enough to last out the whole double set. And there are young women who have wandered round with their favoured swains of the force, during the hours of sunshine, who have been rowed to and fro by stalwart arms on the lake, or, better still, supported by the same stalwart arms, have rushed merrily down the grassy slopes, or have sat on the hillside peeling walnuts for the favoured one, and watched the lithe and limber youths in parti-coloured garments as they dart forward in the foot-race—which is half over before we hear the crack of the pistol that gives the signal for starting.

And these young women—now that Constable Q and his friends have returned to their lonely beat, and are flashing their

lamps over barred shutters and padlocked doors—are heartlessly whirling round in the grand concert-room beneath the blaze of gas-lamps, and to the inspiring strains of the City Police Band, while other stalwart arms support them through the mazes of the dance.

But varied and long-continued as are the amusements provided by the force for its friends, they come to an end at last, and then follows the scramble for the trains in which the ordinary mortal stands, in relation to the brawny constable, as the earthenware pipkin to the solid vessel of brass. And as the train journeys on, while sleepy, curly-headed children repose on the shoulders of blue-coated policemen, we may be allowed to think of those other children, who can no longer pillow their heads on the strong paternal shoulders—the orphans of the police force for whose benefit these revels have been set on foot.

The Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage was first established in 1870, to afford relief to as many of the destitute orphans of the joint forces as the funds may permit, and a very satisfactory item in the balance-sheets is the profit of the fêtes and entertainments organised by the police. Besides a yearly fête at the Crystal Palace, and, as in this year of grace, at the Alexandra Palace also, concerts given by the bands of the various divisions, vocal entertainments by the police minstrels, excursions, cricket-matches, garden-parties, balls, not only give life and spirit to the routine of the service, but bring in a handsome annual sum for the children of the force. More than four thousand pounds was realised during the past year from these sources, a fact that shows both the skilful management of the caterers and the esteem in which the force is held, and its popularity with the general public. In all this, of course, is involved a large amount of gratuitous labour by zealous members of the force, and scanty leisure ungrudgingly given for the benefit of the little orphans in their pleasant home at Twickenham.

And the police themselves, to a man, put down a day's pay for the orphanage—and that means thirteen thousand six hundred and sixty subscribers, constables, sergeants, inspectors, and superintendents—a number which represents pretty accurately the strength of the whole London force, including the river-police and the outlying detachments at the various dockyards and arsenals. And a day's pay

of the force amounts in round numbers to three thousand pounds.

Thus the two items—what the police subscribe in hard cash, and what they earn by their fêtes and entertainments—form a considerable portion of the income of the Orphanage. Then the public come forward with their subscriptions with satisfactory liberality, although, considering the vast wealth of London, and the responsibility of the police in looking after its safety, one might expect to see the great financial bodies more strongly represented on the subscription list. But anyhow, there is sufficient income to provide on a liberal scale for a hundred and forty boys and seventy girls, besides making allowances to widows of deceased members of the force, who manage to maintain a home and keep their children about them.

As for the children in the orphanage, with an abundant dietary and an excellent routine of education; with their playgrounds, gymnasia, and flower-gardens well-stocked and supplied with seeds by friendly florists; with their Christmas toys and fruit supplied by one division or another of the force; with their own band and their musical drill, for both sexes; and with military drill for the boys, and stocking-mending and stitching drill for the girls—it is interesting to find that the girls mend all the boys' socks, numbering in one year six thousand, eight hundred and ninety-five—with all this excellent combination of work and play, it is no wonder that the children are happy and contented, and that they are at length turned out into the world with every prospect of solid success in their various callings in life.

#### A PARADISE OF POSIES.

It's a paradise of posies! what do you call 'em all—  
The bonnie blooms that climb and cling about the  
grand old hall?

I see fairly mazed wi' sight and smell, on all the  
flowers I see—

What is yon trailing scarlet 'un, and yon great  
purple tree?

We see none such pretty buds upon the seaboard,  
where I strive

Through storm and tempest, year by year, to keep  
the hearth alive;

Yet there is something fresh and free about the  
breeze that blows

Through scud, and mist, and driving fret, and long  
dunes white with snows.

I'd liefer fight it out upon our own fierce, rocky  
coast,

Than lie half-sleeping 'mid lound airs and all the  
blooms you boast.

There's bread and fire to win among the tussle with  
the seas,

Aye, and soft days, when ripples laugh below a  
westerling breeze,

And fair strange flowers hands cannot pick, lie  
in each rocky pool,  
When tides are moaning at the ebb, and winds are  
soft and cool;  
Crimson, and blue, and yellow, like yon posies on  
your own,  
But ours are none for touching, they grow for eyes  
alone.

But I've content to see 'em, as I've content to lie,  
When the surf has called me to my grave, up there  
'twixt sea and sky;

I lay I none could sleep wi'out its song about my  
head,

The sea, that's work and play i' life, and watcher  
when one's dead.

### STUDIES OF OVER THE WAY.

CRABBE STREET, ISLINGTON.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

AFTER we had made the syndic's acquaintance, a day seldom passed without our meeting. Sometimes we used to go down to the brewery and smoke our pipes over a glass of Herr Forschmann's best. He took great pride in his house; and it was delightful to see the look of pleasure which would come over his broad, good-natured face as we praised his silver flagons and the quaint old pottery, which he had arranged with considerable taste about the handsome oak mantelpiece of his best apartment. On those days when we did not visit Herr Forschmann, he would usually come up to The White Swan in the evening and smoke a pipe under our balcony, talking all the while the best English he could muster, which was, if anything, a trifle worse than our German. Englishmen did not visit Dreibrücken every day; so, having caught us, Herr Forschmann determined to improve the shining hour, and his knowledge of the English tongue, to the utmost. I think he was a little disappointed when he found out that neither of us knew anything of the chemistry of brewing; and that the processes by which London stout and pale ale are concocted were as a sealed book to us. However, he did not neglect to ask us whether, in the event of his visiting England, we would be able to furnish him with letters of introduction to any of the great English brewers, and what was the fare—third-class return—from London to Burton-on-Trent.

Herr Forschmann was, as I have said, a very handsome man; and Mackintosh, with an eye to the details of the great picture, made sketches of him in all attitudes. At last, at my suggestion, he proposed that Herr Forschmann should sit for his portrait, and accept it, when finished, as a souvenir of our visit.

Now, the first time that I saw Herr Forschmann, I was possessed with the idea that I had seen his face before, though when and where I could not determine; and now, while he was sitting to Mackintosh, whenever I looked, either at the unfinished portrait or at the handsome original, the conviction grew stronger and more certain. I was not more confident that I was alive and in Dreibrücken, than I was that I had seen Herr Forschmann, or his double, some time or other in the past.

One evening I entered the room suddenly, while a sitting was going on. The syndic was standing erect in the middle of the studio with his light-brown hair and beard lit up by the rays of the afternoon sun, and in a moment it flashed across my mind that the face before me was one of those I had seen in that strange dream of mine now just a year ago. There was the golden tint in the hair and beard, the handsome, Dürer-like face of the man whom the dream-woman had denounced as her bitter enemy and the murderer of her child. There, too, in strangest confirmation, was the ugly scar seaming the comely face of Herr Forschmann. Tint, contour, and expression—all were exactly the same.

All this was made clear to me in much less time than I have taken to describe. I started up from my chair, and, making some excuse about a headache, went for a ramble upon the hills. I did not return till night-fall, and during my walk the strange circumstance, which had just been revealed to me, was not absent one moment from my thoughts. I was perfectly sure that it was no fancy of the brain. The particulars of the dream scene, the faces of the chief actors, were as fresh to my memory now as at the moment when I awoke. The impression I had gathered of the woman's enemy, a handsome gentleman in the garb of an artisan, was identical with that which the first sight of Herr Forschmann had made. How was this fact to be reconciled with the theory that dreams are purely retrospective, the reversion of the mind by some obscure process to the impressions of the immediate past? Here was a dream which was a prediction, and nothing else. The more I thought about it, the more puzzled I became.

Madame Degener still delayed her return, and we began to fear we might, after all, leave Dreibrücken without seeing her. Mackintosh's sketches were finished; but we lingered on. To our enquiries Adèle answered, in tones

growing day by day more gloomy, that she supposed her mistress had knocked herself up with nursing.

"And if you have seen all you want to see," she added, "you will do well to get away before madame comes back. I expect all my time will be taken up looking after her, and then you will have to fare the best you may with old Marie's cooking."

Adèle had let us see, all along, that we were conferring no favour on *The White Swan* by taking up our quarters in its hospitable nest, and that all the obligation lay on the other side. We took her counsel in good part, for we knew she was a person of her word, and we trembled to think of the dishes that Marie, an elderly dame, who seemed to spend all her time in the cow-houses, might serve us. We decided to go; and, having given orders to be called in time for the omnibus, went early to our beds.

I fell asleep at once; but I had not slept more than half an hour before I was awakened by the noise of wheels, and the opening and shutting of doors. I was puzzled to think what visitor this might be, coming at such an unwonted time, and I lay awake racking my brain to solve the mystery. When once thoroughly awake, I found that sleep had fled for good. I turned over and over again, only to grow more restless. I counted the spots on the wall-paper which were within the limits of a patch of moonlight opposite my bed, but all in vain. My head began to ache, so I got out of bed and walked to the window. It was a lovely moonlight night. A huge horse-chestnut stood just opposite, and the delicate green of its young leaves, silvered over with the rays of the moon, offered a vivid contrast to the black shadows cast by the clustering masses of foliage. A little farther on grew a tall poplar, throwing up a tower of leafy light and shadow athwart the steely sky. As I stood gazing, a sudden desire came upon me to go round to the other side of the house and see the effect of the moonlight upon the mass of roofs and gables—a picturesque bit I had often admired by day. At the extreme end of the house there was a large chamber, half lumber-room, half granary, in which Mackintosh had set up his easel. There was a wooden balcony outside the window, and this was the point of view I had thought of. I went noiselessly through the sleeping house, and out on to the balcony, where I stood for some minutes

leaning over the quaintly-carved railing, and admiring the wonderful tricks that the moonbeams were playing amidst the massive chimneys, the peaked gables, and the undulating roofs of the old house. The moon was right in front of me, and I felt my eyes dazzled by the light, so I drew back to the corner of the balcony, where I could stand in shadow and admire the beauteous picture lying before me. There was not a sound in the house or in the open air. I covered my eyes with my hands for a few seconds, letting them fall again, as I unveiled them, on the frosted silver roofs and chimneys. I held them there a little, spellbound by the beauty of the moonlight and the intense stillness. When I drew them away and glanced sideways, I found I was no longer alone on the balcony.

About three yards from me, standing in the full light of the moon, was a woman, dressed in the fashion of the place, though her dress was finer in texture and less rude in form. I could scarcely see anything of her face, but I felt sure that she was a stranger. She stood quite still, looking at the moonlit picture before her; but after a little she turned, and showed me, in profile, the face of a well-favoured woman of middle-age. I drew back behind the projecting shutter, for I was intensely curious to see what might be my companion's next movement. I confess I felt a something very much like fear. My brain was excited by wakefulness; and the strange association of Herr Forschmann with the memory of my dream had aroused in my mind that belief in the supernatural which is, I imagine, dormant rather than extinct in the most sceptical of us. I stood watching her, scarcely venturing to draw my breath, when something—it may have been the twittering of the swallows under the eaves—attracted her notice. She again turned her face from me, and, looking upwards, she moved backwards a step or two towards me. As she approached, I saw the shining of silver under the large bow of black ribbon upon her head. Nearer and nearer she came. My eyes were drawn, as if by fascination, to the glitter of the silver, which shone a pallid blue under the moon-rays. By degrees its form and fashion grew clearer. It was a massive silver hairpin, made in the shape of a dagger. But what was it I saw, which sent all the blood in my veins back to my heart, and fixed my eyes with terror? The grinning death's-head, the



outstretched hands, the jewelled cap of the silver skeleton!

"The dream—the dream again!" had almost burst from my lips, but I checked myself, and the next moment the woman turned her head, and for the first time I saw her full face.

There was the face of my dream, with its gentle, melancholy smile, which, both in the portrait and on the dream-woman's lips, seemed to draw my soul after it with its strange magnetic power. Her eyes never met mine, for she still kept her gaze upwards. She was evidently listening to the soft chirping of the birds in their nests, but, after a few moments, she turned and passed noiselessly into the house.

I made my way back to my chamber. My terror had given way to a sense of astonishment, that the veil surrounding the world beyond nature, seemed to have been lifted ever such a little. Whether my eyes were open or shut, I could see nothing but that woman's face, and I lay awake almost all night with my brain in a whirl.

I must have dozed, however, for I was aroused to consciousness by the heavy hand of Adèle on the door. We breakfasted in sleepy silence, the omnibus clattered up to the gate, and we were about to get in, when Adèle came forward.

"I did not tell you, messieurs, that Madame Degener came back last night. I did not let her know that I had guests in the house, for I was sure that, if I did, she would want to get up and give you breakfast herself, in spite of her fatigue; but that old fool, Marie, told her you were here, and now she has sent me to ask you if you will drink a glass of wine with her to your safe journey before you start." We followed Adèle back into the house. "Madame is in the room at the foot of the staircase," she said.

I led the way along the gloomy passage and entered the little room.

Madame Degener came forward to meet us, and, as soon as I caught sight of her face, I knew that my mysterious companion of last night was no other than our hostess herself.

I stood like one confounded. I could say nothing. I stood staring vacantly at Madame Degener, while Mackintosh uttered the conversational commonplaces which the occasion demanded. I remember hearing her express her regret that she had been away from home during our visit. I left untasted the glass of wine

she had poured out for me; I just collected myself sufficiently to reply to her friendly God-speed, and to shake hands with her, but I could not repress a shudder when I felt the touch of her fingers.

We travelled back to London without a halt. Notwithstanding the pleasant associations connected with the larger portion of our stay in Dreibrücken, I felt it would have been better for me if I had never turned my steps thitherward. The superstitious terror with which the events of the last few days had filled me, threw a darkening gloom over the memory of the whole. My mind was distraught and agitated, and I vainly strove to efface the impress which had been stamped upon it. In the routine of my daily work I managed to forget it, but in the times of freedom and relaxation—above all when I retired to rest—the faces and figures I had seen in dream and reality alike, rose up again before me in terrible distinctness and distracted me with their persistent presence. Thus Dreibrücken and its surroundings were invested by my fevered imagination with a weird glamour which had lost all charm of the picturesque or romantic, and seemed only to gleam upon me from the past with a malignant glitter.

About the middle of July I received a letter from my cousin Gregory, telling me that one of the trustees of a lady distantly related to us both had died, and that it was necessary to fill his place with all convenient despatch. Mr. Cross was a trustee himself, and he asked me, somewhat as a personal favour, to undertake the duty. The affairs of the estate in trust were complicated, and Mr. Cross wished to meet me and explain matters before I made my decision. He said that he would travel to London expressly to see me if I would appoint a day, but he suggested that if I had taken away with me any pleasant recollections of Clayfield, it would be more agreeable to escape from the heat of London in midsummer, and renew them by running down from Saturday till Monday. I did not neglect this opportunity of revisiting the spot where an experience, at first not unpleasing, had been begun. When there, I might perhaps be able to divest my mind of the lurid fancies which had taken possession of it. If Clayfield was—in all but name—like Lotos-land in May, how shall I describe its dog-days' sleepiness? However, its stillness and languor were very soothing to my excited frame of mind, and before I reached my destination,



I had almost forgotten the chief motive of my visit.

Mr. Cross, in his swallow-tailed coat, his plaid trousers, and his straw-hat, came out to welcome me as before. I almost smiled to see how unchanged he was in every detail of his outer man. Surely Time must have been standing still at Clayfield since I was last there. He had indeed been very lenient in his dealings with Cousin Gregory, who, with his genial smile and quaint attire, was a pleasant sight to eyes wearied with glare, and dust, and toil-worn faces. After a meal, half dinner, half supper, washed down by some rare old burgundy—for my cousin was a connoisseur in wine as well as art—we adjourned at his suggestion to the long picture-gallery I have already spoken of.

The quiet of the country summer evening, my cousin's generous fare and still more generous wine, had induced a frame of mind more tranquil, and at the same time more buoyant, than I had known for weeks. The startling resemblances I had seen, if they recurred to my memory at all, had lost much of their sharp outline and vivid detail, and, as I mounted the low, irregular stairs, I felt ashamed that I should have been so much moved by fancies so unreal and indistinct. Yet, as I entered the gallery, my eyes involuntarily turned to the picture of my dream. The sun had almost set. Low down on the horizon half his red disc was glowing, every moment dipping deeper into the black shadows. The picture still hung in its place, and through the western window the last rays came streaming in, and shed a broad red patch of colour across the face and neck of the portrait. The correspondence between this and the crimson stain I had seen in my dream was not exact, but the coincidence served to stir up into distinctness many of the scenes which had haunted my mind. I turned my back, however, upon the picture, resolutely determined to conquer my own weakness. Mr. Cross soon plunged into business, and over paper and parchment a couple of hours flew by.

"So now you know all," said Mr. Cross, rising and folding up his papers, "and you can give me your decision before you go."

As he spoke, a dazzling flash of lightning lit up all the gallery, followed by peal on peal of thunder. The whole house shook, and for a moment we both thought it had been struck. During the last two hours a storm

had been brewing, unnoticed by us intent on our documents, and it now burst upon us in frequent flashes, and reverberating peals, and a great downpour of rain. Mr. Cross closed the window, and we watched the scene for a few minutes.

"Well," he said, "it is no use going to bed till this is over; so fill your pipe again, and tell me what you have been doing since I saw you last."

"The old humdrum life," I said, lighting my pipe, "not worth talking about and hardly worth living. I often envy you your life of leisure here, though I dare say I should find it monotonous if I lived it." I purposely made no mention of Alsace. "You seem to be exactly as you were," I added, raising a lamp and walking round the gallery. "By the way, where did you pick this up?" I had halted before the lady's picture, letting the light of the lamp stream full upon the face.

"Oh," said Mr. Cross, coming to my side, "you want to know about that, do you? What do you think about it yourself—its merits as a picture, I mean?"

"I'm not much of a judge," said I, "but it seems as if it may have been a good portrait of the original, though the drawing is badly managed and the colour indifferent."

"That is just my own idea," said Mr. Cross; "and now, if you like, I will tell you an odd story about the painter."

"Five or six years ago, I was hunting for some old tapestry in the North of France. One day I found myself left, high and dry, for nine hours at Laon. I am speaking of the days when there was, perhaps, only one slow train in the day in such out-of-the-way places, and, after I had done the cathedral and the curiosity-shops, I turned into the museum. Here I found, in one of the spare rooms, an exhibition of pictures by modern artists. They were mostly rubbish, the only one I glanced at twice was a woman's portrait, by a man named Lacoste. I could not say what it was that attracted me, but there certainly was an indefinable charm about it which the crude treatment could not destroy. I had half a mind to buy it, but I had been spending a lot of money, so I contented myself with asking for the painter's name and address."

"I returned to England, and, as usual, I was high busy for some days in finding places for my new treasures, and rearranging my old ones, but, do what I might, I could not get rid of that woman's face I

had seen on the canvas at Laon. The longer time went on, and the more I tried to get rid of its haunting eyes, the more clearly did they force themselves upon me. The next summer I was bound for Germany, and I determined to stop en route at Nanci to see if I could find M. Lacoste, and perhaps get a sight at some more of his pictures.

"But when I enquired at the address at Nanci, which the museum-keeper at Laon had given me, I found that poor Lacoste was dead and buried. It seemed, however, that his name and fame, of a sort, survived. He was a local genius, a self-taught man, and, unlike most of these, he was not without honour in his own country. This, however, was probably due rather to his queer ways than to his skill as a painter. It was not often that he could be got to paint anything except some oddity for his own amusement, which he would, as likely as not, destroy as soon as he had finished it. When people came to him for a portrait he would generally refuse absolutely. At times, however, he showed the greatest eagerness, and would beg for a sitting, and very often offer the finished work gratis to the sitter. He possessed small means, just enough to keep him from absolute want, and appeared quite destitute of ambition or desire to grow rich. He would often disappear for days or weeks, living a wild life on the hills, not without converse, it was whispered, with the Prince of Darkness or his local equivalent. In fact the poor fellow was half mad, but he could paint for all that.

"The concierge of the house where he had formerly lived was delighted to talk about him, and he told me where I might find some of his works in the town and neighbourhood. I found a dozen or more, and they gave me, one and all, exactly the same impression as I received from the first I had seen. I was determined to have one, and I offered what I considered to be a very liberal price, but in every case it was refused. A belief had sprung up amongst the country-people that a semi-supernatural charm hung round these pictures, and that they brought good luck to the possessor. One substantial tradesman assured me that he had never made a bad debt since he had been painted by Lacoste, and there was a widow living near Teul who affirmed that the portrait of her late husband had saved the life of her only child. The boy had made up his mind to go to Canada. The evening before he had fixed to leave home, the mother, as she was passing through the

room in which the picture hung, observed that the brows were contracted as if in anger, and, as she looked at it in terror and astonishment, the head was shaken several times as if in a negative gesture. She made some pretext for keeping the boy at home for another month, and it was well she did, for the ship in which he was to have sailed was never heard of again. Though I never heard anything sinister about any of these pictures, I could see that everyone believed that the devil had had something to do with grinding the colours, and perhaps in guiding Lacoste's paint-brush."

Mr. Cross paused and looked at me with a good-humoured, inquisitive smile upon his face. I tried to hide the excitement which, despite myself, was growing upon me as I listened, and, the better to disguise my feelings, I walked to the window, drew up the blind, and looked out. The lightning was still flashing at intervals through the blackness of the night, and the thunder rumbling in the distance.

"But it seems you did pick up one of his pictures at last," I said, still looking out of the window, and not venturing to turn lest my face should betray my agitation. "Do you remember where you found it?"

"I can't recall the name of the place; but I know it was at a little town on the road to Strassburg. There was a sale of furniture belonging to some man who had either died or failed in business, and I heard that his wife's portrait, painted by Lacoste, would be brought to the hammer. I secured it after some sharp bidding. By the way," he added, rising, "I fancy I made a note of it somewhere. I'll see if I can find it."

Mr. Cross opened a carved oak cabinet, and turned over a pile of old papers, diaries, and note-books.

"Ah, here it is at last. Nothing much, though. 'Lot eighty-two. Portrait of Madame Degener, by Lacoste. Three hundred and ninety francs.' I remember now. The woman was left a widow, and took a public-house in a village near Strassburg."

"Madame Degener!" I cried, losing all my self-command as a feeling of horror crept over me.

"Yes, that was her name. What! Do you know anything about her? Have you ever—?"

My cousin's interrogation was abruptly stopped. A door at the other end of the passage leading to the gallery burst open,

and a great gust of wind swept down into the gallery itself, extinguishing the lights and leaving us in total darkness. A moment after, one last blinding flash lit up the room, casting a pale flickering radiance over the woman's portrait, which hung just in front of me. My eyes were dazzled, and for a moment I was as one blind; but before the darkness closed around me it seemed that the painted face on the mysterious canvas underwent a strange and awesome transfiguration. The brow, heretofore so fair and open, contracted in a threatening scowl; rage and hatred flashed from the eyes; the lips were closely set; and the hand, before invisible, raised itself to the head, and drew out from the coil of the hair a quaintly-wrought dagger pin, which glittered a pale, cold blue in the last glimmer of the lightning flash. Then came the darkness, and I saw no more. I heard my cousin stumbling along in the dark to find a light. At last the door was secured, and the candles re-lit, and then we parted for the night.

Three days later I was in Strassburg, drawn thither by an attraction as strong as it was inexplicable. It was late at night when I entered the hotel there. The courteous landlady received me in person, and recognised me as soon as she saw my face.

"Ah, monsieur, it is you again. This is pleasant to see you, and your friend, is he also come?"

"Not this time, madame," I replied, hardly knowing how to explain my presence. "I had a week to spare, and I determined to spend it at Dreibrücken. After the pleasant time we had at The White Swan before, I did not see that I could do better."

"The White Swan!" she cried with a look of horror on her face. "You are not going there now, surely? Have you not heard all about it—the fatal news from Dreibrücken? Ah no, of course you have not. It was only on Saturday last that it occurred, though it seems an age."

"My good woman, what do you mean?" I asked. "What has happened? I have heard nothing from Dreibrücken since I was there."

The landlady threw up her hands, and burst into tears.

"You must have seen Peter Forschmann, monsieur, when you were there? Peter Forschmann, a worthy man whom everyone liked and respected. There was some unhappy dispute between him and Madame

Degener. She, poor woman! has been in a very excited state ever since the death of her child. We have heard nothing about how it arose, or what was the cause of it. All we know is that last Saturday night they quarrelled violently, and that she killed poor Forschmann in a fit of rage—stabbed him to the heart. I saw the gendarmes take her past to prison as I came home from early mass on Sunday morning."

"Last Saturday night!" As the good woman spoke these words I remembered where I had been and what I had beheld last Saturday night—the strange and fearful change which I had seen pass over the face of the portrait. What did it portend? Was it merely an effect of the blinding shock of the lightning upon my optic nerves, or was it some manifestation of that obscure world, whose confines we can hardly locate, much less define; a manifestation which had its source in that awful deed wrought at the selfsame time in the distant Alsatian village.

As I said at the beginning of my story, I am no believer in what is generally known as the supernatural. The larger one's experience grows, the more one is convinced that the strangest coincidences may occur without any traceable connection of cause and effect. But, for all my scepticism, I feel bound to confess that I could not, for the life of me, have any of that mad Frenchman's pictures in my possession. The more I think about him and his work, the more I am convinced that he had some deep touch of insight or genius which enabled him to paint a picture more real than reality itself—more like than the living face; that he could paint more than the outward seeming of the individual on one of those ill-drawn, crudely-coloured canvasses of his, peering deep down with the quick glance of his genius, and clothing in form some subtle characteristics which are to common eyesight invisible. I fancied that, consciously or unconsciously, he could throw into his pictures some weird, electric stroke, the sight of which might stimulate another sympathetic mind to interpret for itself what the painter vaguely felt. Rather a wild notion, perhaps you will say, but a little mental twist is allowable in this particular case, I think. I will even go so far as to say I believe that some people might have been possessed with less reasonable delusions, had they been subjected to an experience like my own.

## COUNT PAOLO'S RING.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE old times seemed to have returned again, Lansdell thought, as he sat in the drawing-room—at a safe distance from Mrs. Monteith, who leant back in her chair half asleep, but still holding her smelling-bottle to her nose, as a precaution against infection—with Angela's graceful white figure at the opposite side of the room bending over her book; and Nancie at the piano singing, in her clear, sweet voice, one of his favourite songs. Outside the storm was raging; the thunder pealed, and the rain beat against the windows, and flooded the gravel paths; but within was brightness and soft music, and the scent of flowers.

"How long was it since he had last sat there," Lansdell wondered. "A month! Surely it was impossible that it could be only a month!" He had passed through so much since then; through such a dark valley of despair, and misery, and death, that it seemed as if years must have passed since last they had all gathered in the pretty room and listened to Nancie's music. He leant back in his chair in a singularly happy, dreamy mood. He did not want to talk, to move, to do anything but just be silent, and rest, and enjoy this interlude of calm repose—this glimpse of his earthly Eden! By-and-by, in a very little while, he must go back to that other life; to the struggle with disease, and death, and sin, which had been his lot for the last few weeks—which had tried his strength so terribly. He would go back, and strength would be given for this work; but just now, for a few happy moments, he resolutely put aside all disquieting thoughts—banished the pale spectres of misery and disease, and was quietly content and happy.

He was so quiet that Nancie thought, until she looked up and met his eyes, that he was asleep.

"Go on, Nancie; I like that," he said; and he smiled at her with an odd, absent look in his eyes that startled Nancie. She looked at him eagerly. How white and worn, for all his restful expression, he looked! she thought; and her eyes grew so misty that she could not see to read the music. She struck a false note, hesitated, and finally closed the book.

"I am getting hoarse. I think I must

have taken a little cold," she said hurriedly. "Mr. Lansdell, how tired you look! You must not think of returning home to-night. We will send word to the vicarage."

Lansdell shook his head.

"No, I could not stay," he said decisively; "I may be wanted during the night. This"—and he smiled and looked round the room, and then at Nancie's anxious face—"is only an interlude—only a happy holiday. I really ought not to be here at all, but I felt as if I must come—as if I must see you again before—"

He stopped, and his eyes grew dreamy again. Nancie's heart beat fast.

"Before what?" she said.

Lansdell passed his hand across his forehead, and looked at her with a bewildered gaze.

"I scarcely know," he said absently; "only I felt that I must come. The impulse came over me this afternoon, Nancie, and it was irresistible. I hesitated a long time, for I did not know whether you would care to see me; whether you would be afraid of infection; but the impulse was too strong, and I came."

"I am very glad you did come. We have so longed to see you—we have been so anxious about you. Oh, we have been with you in heart all the time," Nancie cried in a low, broken voice.

It was very rarely that Nancie allowed herself to indulge in the luxury of tears, but now they welled up into her eyes, and fell on the keys of the piano in great sparkling drops. She dashed them impatiently away, but not before Lansdell had seen them. He looked greatly surprised and moved.

"I am glad to know that, though indeed I did not doubt it—I knew it all the time," he said quickly, and he put his hand on her arm, and gave it a kind little squeeze. "Mr. Monteith told me how much you wished to help us, and how angry you were when he refused his permission," he went on, and he smiled. "Will you forgive me if I say I was glad he refused?"

"Glad! Why?" Nancie asked, and Lansdell smiled again.

"Is not one always glad to know that the thing or the person whom we love and prize most is placed beyond the reach of danger?" he said. "If you had been with us, sharing our work and its perils, I should have been in constant anxiety about you; as it was, I could think of you here, safe and happy."



"Happy!"

Nancie looked at him with indignant eyes and quivering lips.

"Happy! while you were in danger," she said, and her voice thrilled with pained reproach.

Lansdell started a little, and his eyes brightened. The odd feeling of numbness and exhaustion, both of body and mind, which had been gradually stealing over him during the last hour, left him altogether for a time. There was a smile of triumph in his eyes, and on his lips, as he leant forward, and looked curiously into her face.

"Nancie, were you unhappy because of me—of my danger?" he said.

"Oh, you know I was!" Nancie said with a little sob. "It was only for you—what did I care for Dr. Munroe"—Dr. Munroe was one of Nancie's greatest admirers—"or Mr. Holmes, or any of them—I only thought of you! And you did not deserve it, I dare say. You were glad I was not there—you were quite happy with your Janet Munroe!"

Angela, with a quick perception that her presence could be dispensed with, had left the room, and Mrs. Monteith was now fast asleep, so the lovers were, to all intents and purposes, alone. Lansdell laughed.

"My Janet Munroe, indeed!" he said.

And then he rose, and stood by the piano, and put his arm round Nancie's slim waist, and kissed her hair, and would have kissed the sweet, petulant face, only that it was hidden in the owner's hands, and only her ears and a tiny bit of chin were visible.

"Janet Munroe, indeed!" he repeated. "As if there could be any love for me but you in all the world, my darling!" he said proudly.

"I am sure you like her. Oh, it is no use saying you do not!" Nancie tried, not very successfully, to hide the happiness of which she was half ashamed under a veil of assumed petulance. "And, indeed, there is no doubt that she would make you a much better wife than I ever could. She is so quiet and good, and fond of going to church, and visiting the poor, and—and all that—and she doesn't care in the least how old-fashioned her dresses are, or what dowdy hats she wears; and as to flirting, or having a bit of fun of that kind," Nancie went on emphatically, "I don't think it would ever enter her head to do it. Now, I am quite different."

Lansdell laughed. He drew the pretty

head on his shoulder, and stroked her hair tenderly.

"Perhaps that was the reason why I fell in love with you, my darling—because you were different. Janet Munroe is a dear good girl, and I have the greatest respect for her. Nay, more than respect—reverence. No one who has seen what I have seen the last three weeks of her self-denial, and courage, and patience, could fail to reverence her. But, as to love," and he smiled. "Ah, you had taken all I had to give long ago, Nancie."

"Really!"

Nancie looked up with a new seriousness in her eyes, a little serious smile on her lips. She put up her hand and touched his beard gently.

"I wonder why," she said. "Oh, I have been so unhappy about you! I used to lie awake half the night, thinking about you, and wondering what you were doing, and wishing I could help you and share your danger. Oh, this has been the longest, weariest month. Promise"—and just for one instant she allowed her cheek to rest against his breast—"you will come up every day now. Father will not allow us to go into town at all now, so, unless you come, I shall not have a chance of seeing you."

"I will come, if possible, my dearest."

Lansdell's voice faltered as he spoke; a mist rose before his eyes; for one brief moment the room and all that was in it grew dim and indistinct. The strange feeling of unconsciousness and bewilderment, which earlier in the evening had overtaken him, returned, and he staggered and clutched at Nancie's chair to prevent himself from falling. Another moment, and the faintness had passed, and he smiled reassuringly at Nancie's startled, half-frightened face.

"What is it, Nancie? Why do you look so alarmed?" he said; but his voice, even to his own ears, sounded far away and unlike his own, and it did not tend to reassure Nancie.

"You look so odd. Don't you feel well?" she said anxiously.

"Quite well; only a little tired. I think I will say 'Good-night,' now, Nancie. Don't look so anxious, my child." And he took her in his arms and kissed her. "I wonder if you know how very happy you have made me to-night, dear?" he said very tenderly and gravely. "You have given me a new interest in life—new strength and courage for my work! Why, I feel

strong enough to fight against a dozen fevers now!"

"You look much more fit to go to bed and be nursed well," Nancie said. "You will come to-morrow. Oh, you must," as Lansdell hesitated. "I shall be so anxious if you don't; I shall fancy all kinds of dreadful things."

"If possible I will come; if not, I will write."

"And don't work too hard. Remember"—and Nancie looked up with a charming smile and pout—"you must think of me now, and take care of yourself for my sake, or I shall be very much annoyed and disgusted. Duty is all very well; but your first duty is to me now. Do you hear, sir?"

Lansdell gave a grave smile.

"Yes, I hear," he said; "and when I am in any doubt—when my duty to my neighbour seems to clash with my duty to my sweetheart—I will come to you, and you shall decide which has the higher claim. For I am quite sure"—and he looked at her with a proud light in his eyes—"the Nancie whom I love so dearly—ah, she little knows how dearly!—would sooner cut off her right hand than lift a finger to call me back from duty's path, however dreary and uninviting that path may seem to her or me."

Nancie's lips quivered a little. She did not speak, but she put up her sweet lips and kissed him shyly, and clung to him for one moment in a silence which was more eloquent and infinitely sweeter than any spoken answer. It was broken after an instant in the most unromantic manner by the sound of carriage-wheels, which came up the drive and stopped before the hall door.

Lansdell looked enquiringly at Nancie.

"Visitors?" he said.

"No; it is father. He has been out of town this afternoon. The carriage went to the station half an hour ago to meet him. It will take you back to the vicarage."

Lansdell accepted the offer of the carriage willingly. The Abbey was some distance from the vicarage; there was no cab-stand near, and he felt faint and tired, and quite unequal to the long walk. Again, as he said good-night to Mrs. Monteith, the faintness returned, and it was only by a great effort that he recalled his scattered senses, and concealed his indisposition from Nancie. Mr. Monteith, whom he passed in the hall, remembered afterwards how

absent and odd his manner was, and how ill he looked. He must have either fainted or fallen asleep immediately after entering the carriage, for it seemed only an instant to him before it stopped before the vicarage, and the footman opened the door.

"Here already?" he said, and he stared blankly at the man as he descended.

He stood before the vicarage door for quite a minute, fumbling in his pocket for his latch-key. He found it at last, and entering the house unseen, went into the study, and sank down on the nearest chair, and looked round the familiar room with blank, wondering eyes. By-and-by his brain grew clearer, but with fuller consciousness a great fear awoke in his mind. What did it mean? What was the meaning of these strange fits of unconsciousness? Was he going to be ill? Had the fever, against which he had fought so long and valiantly, turned on him at last, and seized him for its prey? Lansdell was a brave man, but life had grown unspeakably sweet to him during the past few hours. Was it wonderful if, knowing so well the strength of the terrible foe, he feared his heart should sink? Had his hopes been realised? Had this perfect happiness come to him only—as so many earthly blessings come, when it is too late?

"Oh, not that—not that!" he prayed, with a sharp thrill of agony in his voice.

He said the words half aloud, and his housekeeper, who was passing the door, heard his voice and came into the room. She was a staid, middle-aged woman; she had lived with the late vicar many years, and had remained with Lansdell after his predecessor's death. She was a bit of a tyrant, but she loved her master well, and now she looked at him with anxious eyes.

"Did you call, sir?"

"No," Lansdell spoke wearily. "Has any message come for me, Martha? Have I been wanted?"

"Dr. Munroe sent round just now, sir, to ask if you would call at Mrs. Bampton's to-night. She is very ill, and he doesn't think she will last over the night."

"Poor woman!" Lansdell rose from his chair, and at the call of duty his strength returned. "Bring me my mackintosh, Martha. It is raining heavily."

"No, sir," Martha barred the door with her portly figure; "out of this house you don't go till you have had something to eat. Dr. Munroe told me the other day that the surest way to catch infection was

to go into a sick-room on an empty stomach. 'You look after the vicar, Martha,' says he, 'and see that he has a glass of wine and a biscuit, or some soup, before he goes out.' Them was his very words, and I mean to carry them out."

"Very well; make haste, then."

Lansdell was not altogether sorry for the prolonged rest; he did not move from his chair; and he looked so white and wan when Martha entered with food and wine, that her heart ached for him.

"You look a deal fitter to go to bed, sir. Wait till morning," she urged; "a few hours can't matter."

"No; morning may be too late. What, champagne, Martha? What extravagance! Champagne is only for sick people, you know."

"You need it as much as any of them, sir."

Martha, with an inflexible face, poured out a tumbler of the sparkling fluid. Lansdell drank it eagerly, but he tried in vain to eat. The food seemed to choke him, and it was with great difficulty that he forced himself to swallow a few morsels.

"I must take care of myself now for Nancie's sake," he thought; and that thought, quite as much as the wine, revived his failing strength.

The colour flushed to his cheeks, and he looked quite bright and cheerful as he pushed his plate back, and took his mackintosh from Martha's hands. She went with him to the door, and looked after him eagerly as he walked quickly away. The storm was over, the thunder had ceased, but the rain still fell heavily, and the air was sweet, and pure, and fragrant, and full, or so Lansdell fancied, of a promise of returning health. He felt, in spite of the solemn errand on which he was bound, curiously happy and excited, and indeed almost light-headed, and he walked, in spite of an occasional stumble, briskly up the street. But when he reached the door of the house the old faintness returned, and he was obliged to pause on the step and lean against the door-post, and wait for a few minutes to recover his strength before he rang the bell.

On the landing just outside the door of the sick-room he came face to face with Dr. Munroe. They had not met before that day, and now they paused and shook hands, and exchanged a few words.

"How is she?" Lansdell pointed to the door; "any better?"

"Better? No."

Dr. Munroe spoke absently, and he looked sharply into his friend's face.

"What's the matter with you, Lansdell? You look rather queer! Worn out, I suppose," he said, and he took Lansdell's hand, and in spite of his impatient remonstrance felt his pulse.

"When you have quite finished, perhaps you will allow me to pass. I must see her at once," Lansdell said impatiently.

Dr. Munroe shook his head.

"No, you don't, my friend," he said placidly; "you don't go into that room, or any other but your own bedroom to-night. Now listen to me, and don't be a fool;" he put his hand on his friend's shoulder, and his voice grew earnest and impressive. "You can do no good in there. The poor woman is unconscious now; she will be dead before the night is over. And it is as much as your life is worth to enter that room in your present state. Go home to bed."

"I cannot; I must do my duty," Lansdell said in a quick, excited tone. "If she is dying, as you say, I am all the more needed there. Let me pass!"

But the doctor set his back firmly against the door, and pushed Lansdell away.

"Duty—your duty is to the living," he said sternly. "Leave the dying to Heaven's mercy. She is past your prayers now. Ah!" he sprang forward as Lansdell staggered, and put his hand to his head with a bewildered expression. "Just what I thought!" he muttered.

He put his arm through Lansdell's, and led him downstairs and out of the house into the street. The cool wind and the raindrops that splashed in their faces revived Lansdell, but he did not object, or make any further remonstrance, as his friend led him up the quiet street.

Only once he spoke, and that was when Munroe turned up his coat-collar, and said, in his grumbling voice, "that it was a nasty dark night; not fit for a dog to be out of doors"; then he looked up with an odd, bright light in his eyes.

"Yes, a dark night. The night cometh," he muttered, "the night when no work may be done."

"Oh, not yet awhile, old man," Munroe said cheerfully. "We can't spare you just yet. Here, Mrs. Martha," as the house-keeper opened the door, and looked surprised to see her master back so soon, "I have brought Mr. Lansdell home. He must go to bed at once, and don't let him get up till I see him. If he is obstinate,

and persists in doing so, hide his clothes, or lock the door, or do anything you like, only keep him in bed."

"Very well, sir. It was quite against my wish that he went out to-night," Martha said anxiously. "Now, sir," and she turned sternly to Lansdell, "you come upstairs at once to bed."

Lansdell was too weary to make any further remonstrance. He followed his faithful dragon upstairs, and drank the medicine, for which Munroe ran round to his surgery, with a meek submission which won Martha's unqualified approval.

Mr. Holmes, who lived at the vicarage, came in shortly, and was much alarmed and grieved to hear of his vicar's illness.

"But I am not surprised; he has done the work of three men lately," he said.

"Yes," and Dr. Munroe, who was not fond of parsons in the abstract, looked sharply through his spectacles at the young curate; "and now it is time for some of you young ones to put your shoulders to the wheel, and let him have rest. I'll look in first thing in the morning, Mrs. Martha; but if any change occurs during the night, or he seems worse, send for me at once."

Long before morning the summons which Dr. Munroe expected came, but though he hastened at once to his friend, he could do little. The fever in this, as in all the other cases, must run its course; they could only be patient and hope for the best. There were many sad hearts in the parish that day. Lansdell was liked by all; his pure, self-denying life, and his courage and devotion during the last few weeks, had gained him the love and admiration of all true souls who could appreciate his noble qualities, whether or not they agreed with his religious views.

It was told afterwards, and perhaps this pleased Lansdell as much as anything, that the Roman Catholic priest and the ranter minister had both alluded to his illness from their several pulpits, and asked that the prayers of their congregations might be offered up for his recovery; that the atheist lecturer at the Market Cross, with whom Lansdell had had many an argument, called daily at the vicarage to enquire after him; and that the sisters of mercy said their beads and vowed innumerable candles to the Virgin, if only a life so useful and so dearly loved might be spared.

Lansdell was quite unconscious of the kind wishes, the fervent prayers. Day after day he lay, sometimes unconscious, more

often raving in wild delirium, watched over with ceaseless care by Dr. Munroe and Martha, and after the first two days by Nancie herself. She had first heard of his illness on the evening of the day which followed his visit to the Abbey. All that day she had remained in the house, or garden, watching for him. He would be sure either to come or send, and she would not run the risk of missing him. All that day she was very happy, but very restless. She could not settle to any occupation; her work was taken up only to be thrown aside, her book shared the same fate. She sat down to the piano and played a few bars, and then sprang up and sauntered into the conservatory and pulled a few dead leaves off the plants, or ran across the lawn to the fountain to plague the gold-fish. Angela watched her with placid amusement, and not without a shrewd suspicion of the cause of her unwonted excitement.

Nancie had not yet acknowledged that the event which Angela had often prophesied, but which Nancie herself had always denied, would come to pass, was already an accomplished fact; she felt indeed a little shy of the confession, and had decided that she would wait until Lansdell's next visit before she told her news. That everyone, from her mother downward, would be delighted, she was quite aware, but she hesitated to confess that she, who had scoffed and giped at love and had openly avowed her intention of living in single blessedness, had at last succumbed to the common fate. So she kept her secret, and told no one of the happiness that had come to her; but it was easy enough for Angela's quick eyes to read it in her face, and to know that the doubts and anxieties which had troubled her of late had been set at rest.

"How bright and happy you look to-day, Nancie," she said, looking up from her book at Nancie, who, during a short interval of tranquillity, was standing by the window looking into the garden with a dreamy smile on her lips. "What has caused this sudden change in the atmosphere, my child? Yesterday all was gloom and sadness, and forebodings of evil. To-day—sunshine and brightness!"

Nancie laughed.

"The thunderstorm, of course," she said gaily. "It cleared the atmosphere—and who could help being happy on such an exquisite day as this? Listen! even the birds have waked up from their summer



silence, and are singing as if it were spring again. Do you hear that thrush?"

"Oh, the lark is singing in the sky,  
A merry, merry song;  
But there is a bird in my heart, love,  
That is singing all day long."

Angela sang the words gaily, and she looked at Nancie and smiled.

"It is the heart-music that is ringing so sweetly in thy ears, my Nancie!" She came across the room, and put her hand caressingly on Nancie's shoulder. "Is it not?"

Nancie blushed and laughed.

"Perhaps it is. I think I am what father calls 'fey' to-day. I feel so happy as if I could never be wretched or sad again; as if life was going to be all sunshine—all happiness," she said.

But even as she said the words she shivered and turned pale.

"Oh, I ought not to have said that. The gods are jealous of happy mortals; perhaps—who knows?—some punishment will come on me for my presumption," she said in a low voice.

"What nonsense!"

Angela laughed merrily. She was standing by the window, and now she looked down the drive, up which a dog-cart was now approaching.

"Who comes? Dr. Munroe, I do believe!" she said.

The doctor was a great favourite with both the girls. It was some time since he had been at the Abbey, and they went eagerly forward to welcome and reprove him in one breath.

"What an age it is since we saw you—just five weeks, I believe, to-day; but there," and Nancie smiled at him gaily, "I suppose we must forgive you since you have come at last."

Munroe smiled, but his face wore a preoccupied air, and his voice was very grave as he answered:

"Don't welcome me before you know my errand, Miss Nancie. I bring bad news—not so very bad." He added the last words quickly, for Nancie started and turned pale, and her lips quivered.

"What is it? Tell me at once, please," she said. "Is it Mr. Lansdell?"

"Yes."

Any faint hope which Munroe might have entertained of winning Nancie's love, died a sudden death then and there at the sight of her blanched, anxious face. She twisted her hands nervously together.

"Go on! He is ill?" she said.

"Very ill," Munroe assented gravely. "He has worked too hard—worked far beyond his strength, and now he has utterly broken down."

"Is it—the fever?"

Munroe nodded. The sight of Nancie's face, of the anguish in the sweet eyes, usually so bright and merry, was almost more than he could bear. He was so sorry for her, and he could do nothing to help her; he could not lighten her burden of grief, or make her trial easier, however much he loved her. He tried to speak a few comforting words, and to speak hopefully; but it is doubtful if Nancie heard him at first, though she appeared to listen, and now and then gave a gesture of assent.

"Who is with him?" she said at last.

"Oh, he has a capital nurse in old Martha; she is a perfect treasure," Dr. Munroe answered cheerfully. "And, now that the worst of the fever is over, I shall have more time to devote to him. I really think we have turned the corner at last," he went on. "There has been no fresh case of fever, except Lansdell's, for two days, and all the sick are doing well. Come, Miss Nancie," and he took her hand kindly, "cheer up; we will pull him through, please God!"

"You are going there now—back to him?"

Nancie looked up eagerly.

"Yes. I shall call on my way home. Why? Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes."

Nancie's pale cheeks flushed a little, and her eyes grew brighter.

"You can take me back with you. Yes"—for Munroe started and looked at her with an astonished face—"I am going. Who has a better right than I to be there with him? I am to be his wife, you know—ah, I forgot," and she gave a little smile; "you did not know. Well, it is to be so. You will take me, won't you?"

"Certainly not without your parents' permission," Munroe said decisively. "I would not take such a responsibility upon myself. Lansdell is in no immediate danger, though he is very ill, I admit; besides," and he paused, and looked down at her gravely, "I would not allow you in your present excited state to enter the room. Wait till to-morrow, Miss Nancie; you will be calmer then."

"I am quite calm now. Why, look at Angela! See, she is crying, and I have never shed a single tear," Nancie said with a little piteous smile. "I could not well

be calmer! And mother and father are out this evening, so I can't ask their permission. Please take me." She put her hand quietly on his arm, and looked up with wistful, lovely eyes into his face. "Ah," she said piteously, "put yourself in his place. Think if you were ill, and suffering, and longing for the sight of the girl you loved—"

"He would not know you even if you went. And I am quite sure that he would not wish you to risk your life for him—no man who loved you would," Munroe cried eagerly, and there was a thrill of deep emotion in his voice.

"And no woman worth loving would hesitate a moment—would have the faintest fear," Nancie cried impatiently. "What, he is to be left to the care of servants because it is possible—barely possible—that I might take infection! Why, if I were his sister you would not say a word to keep me away from him, and I am more to him than ten sisters—I am his promised wife, I tell you," Nancie cried passionately, "and I have surely the best right to be with him. Look at your own sister. Only yesterday he was speaking of her bravery, and courage, and devotion. I am not like her; I could not do it for anybody, but I could brave anything for him. So you will take me, dear Dr. Munroe;" and now once more the little hands were clasped round his arm, and the sweet, anxious eyes were raised to his with a look so piteous and imploring, that Munroe was half inclined to give way and to promise all she asked. But he persisted in his refusal.

"No, I can't," he said; "I have no right to do it. Wait till to-morrow; get permission from your father, and then I will take you. Now be a sensible girl;" and he gently loosened the clinging hands and patted her shoulder kindly. "I promise you one thing, that if he is in any immediate danger, I will send for you at once."

"You promise that?"

"On my honour!" Munroe said eagerly.

"Very well."

Nancie turned quietly away. She walked to the window, and leant her heated forehead against the glass. She scarcely heard anything of the conversation which went on between the others, though she was conscious by-and-by that Munroe came to her side, that he took her hand and said a few kind words of farewell, and she watched him get into the dog-cart and drive quickly away down the avenue, but all in a dreamy, unreal way. Outside the sun was shining as brightly as ever, the same birds were singing, but where was the heart-music of which Angela had spoken only such a little while before? It was quite hushed, quite silent now. Would it ever wake again? she wondered, or was the voice hushed in an everlasting silence? She looked round at last and saw Angela watching her with tearful sad eyes, and she came a little nearer and put her hand on Angela's arm.

"You see I was right. The gods were jealous," she said with a little strange smile.

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	Yearly.	Half-Yearly		Yearly.	Half-Yearly		Yearly.	Half-Yearly		Yearly.	Half-Yearly
20	£ s. d. 1 12 5	£ s. d. 0 16 9	45	£ s. d. 3 6 2	£ s. d. 1 14 1	20	£ s. d. 1 17 8	£ s. d. 0 19 6	45	£ s. d. 3 16 0	£ s. d. 1 19 2
25	1 16 6	0 18 10	50	3 19 6	2 0 11	25	2 2 11	1 2 2	50	4 11 3	2 7 0
30	2 1 8	1 1 6	55	4 18 3	2 10 8	30	2 9 3	1 5 5	55	5 14 8	2 19 0
35	2 8 1	1 4 10	60	6 3 4	3 3 8	35	2 16 3	1 9 0	60	7 5 11	3 15 4
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